

# MEETING MINUTES

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL  
January 6, 2026



**CONVENE:** 7:02 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Leatta Dahlhoff and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Joan Cathey, Angela Jefferson, Meghan Sullivan, Eileen Swarthout and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: Acting City Administrator Kelly Adams, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Deputy Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Information Technology Director Lance Inman, Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Denney, Recreation Manager Todd Anderson, Acting Police Chief Carlos Quiles, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Communications Director Jason Wettstein, Executive Assistant Brittaney McClanahan, Deputy City Clerk Tracie Core and City Clerk Melody Valiant.

Others: Sheryl Gordon McCloud, Washington State Supreme Court Justice

**SWEARING IN OF 2026 ELECTED OFFICIALS BY SHERYL GORDON MCCLOUD WASHINGTON STATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE:** Mayor Dahlhoff introduced Supreme Court Justice Sheryl Gordon McCloud.

Court Justice McCloud administered the oath of office to Leatta Dahlhoff, Eileen Swarthout, Meghan Sullivan and Peter Agabi.

**SPECIAL ITEMS:**

**PROCLAMATION:** Mayor Dahlhoff and Councilmembers Agabi, Cathey, Jefferson, Sullivan, Swarthout and Von Holtz read a proclamation declaring

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY, JANUARY 19, 2026**

January 19, 2026, Martin Luther King Junior Day. The proclamation urges people to take the opportunity to reflect upon Dr. King’s vision and rededicate themselves to continuing to advance the principles of justice and equality for all.

Mayor Dahlhoff presented the proclamation to Dr. Thelma Jackson and invited Councilmembers to speak to the proclamation. Dr. Jackson thanked everyone for all their comments and invited everyone to attend their celebration on January 19, 2026, at the New Life Baptist Church.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Public comment was given by residents Partlow, Reynolds, Hays, McInnis, Brewer, Nicandri, Sanders, Hanson, Ruiz, Crawford and Ftiz-Hugh.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- a. Approval of Minutes: City Council Work Session Joint Planning Commission, December 9, 2025
- b. Approval of Minutes: City Council Meeting, December 16, 2025
- c. Payment of Vouchers
- d. 2026 Sustainability Division Work Plan
- e. Employment Agreement for Assistant City Administrator

**MOTION:**

**Councilmember Von Holtz, moved, seconded by Councilmember Jefferson, to approve the Consent Calendar as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS:**

**ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM:**

Acting City Administrator Adams reported every two years, the Council elects its Mayor Pro Tem to serve as the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor Pro Tem assumes the responsibility of the Mayor during periods of absence.

Mayor Dahlhoff invited nominations for Mayor Pro Tem.

**NOMINATION:**

**Councilmember Agabi nominated Councilmember Swarthout to serve as Mayor Pro Tem.**

Mayor Dahlhoff invited other nominations.

**NOMINATION:** Councilmember Cathey nominated Councilmember Von Holtz to serve as Mayor Pro Tem.

As there were no other nominations Mayor Dahlhoff closed the nominations and gave each candidate an opportunity to accept and speak to their nomination. Councilmember Swarthout and Councilmember Von Holtz accepted their nominations and thanked everyone and said it would be a great honor to be the Mayor Pro Tem. Attorney Kirkpatrick suggested a roll call vote.

**MOTION:** A roll call vote for Councilmember Swarthout as Mayor Pro Tem was done:  
Councilmember Von Holtz - Nay  
Councilmember Jefferson - Yay  
Councilmember Agabi - Yay  
Councilmember Sullivan - Nay  
Councilmember Swarthout - Yay  
Councilmember Cathey - Nay

**MOTION:** A roll call vote for Councilmember Von Holtz as Mayor Pro Tem was done:  
Councilmember Von Holtz - Yay  
Councilmember Jefferson - Yay  
Councilmember Agabi - Nay  
Councilmember Sullivan - Yay  
Councilmember Swarthout - Nay  
Councilmember Cathey - Yay

**VOTE OF AFFIRMATION:** After the two roll call votes, Councilmember Von Holz has the majority and will serve as the Mayor Pro Tem for the next two years.

**COUNCIL POSITION NO. 1 SELECTION PROCESS:** Attorney Kirkpatrick stated that seven applications had been received for Council Position No. 1. The next step will be scheduling the interviews for January 10th. She offered up an opportunity to narrow the selection for interviews and confirm the date of the interviews still worked for everyone. One candidate requested accommodation to have an interview by Zoom due to a scheduling conflict.

Council asked questions about the schedule and confirmed that they would like to interview all seven applicants on January 10,

2026, and would accommodate the applicant requesting a zoom interview.

**CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT AND APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH PAUL SIMMONS AS CITY ADMINISTRATOR:**

Director Sutherland presented an employment agreement with Paul Simmons as the City Administrator. She went over his lengthy municipal experience and long track record of leadership in local and regional government. He currently works at Metro Parks Tacoma as the Director of Business Administration and Planning.

Council discussed the contract and appointment process. Councilmember Agabi asked several questions regarding the RCW authority related to hiring and signing contracts with the City Administrator and Management team.

**RECESS:**

**Mayor Dahlhoff adjourned the meeting for a 10-minute recess at 8:32 p.m.**

**RECONVENE:**

**Mayor Dahlhoff reconvened the meeting at 8:43 p.m.**

Mayor Dahlhoff invited any other comments regarding the contract.

**MOTION**

**Councilmember Von Holtz, moved, seconded by Councilmember Swarthout, to confirm the appointment and approval of the Employment Agreement with Paul Simmons as City Administrator. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY:**

*Peter Agabi*

The committee has not met. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2026, and they will be discussing the following items:

- Challenges/Opportunities for People Experiencing Homelessness in Tumwater
- Tacoma Community College Affiliation Agreement

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT:**

The committee has not met. The next meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2026, and they will be discussing the following item:

- Service Provider Agreement with ICF for the Habitat Conservation Plan - Phase 3 Amendment 1

**PUBLIC WORKS:**  
*Eileen Swarthout*

The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2026, and they will be discussing the following item:

- Service Provider Agreement with HDR Engineering for the Tumwater Boulevard Northbound I-5 On/Off Ramp Intersection Amendment No. 1

**BUDGET & FINANCE:**  
*Leatta Dahlhoff*

The next meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2026, and they will be discussing the following item:

- Monthly Financial Update

**MAYOR/CITY  
ADMINISTRATOR'S  
REPORT:**

Acting City Administrator Adams shared that City Hall will be closed on January 19, 2026, for Martin Luther King Junior Day and additionally application submissions for the new Equity commission will open on the same day. Also, City Hall will open later on January 27, 2026, to accommodate an all staff meeting.

Lastly, she shared an event that occurred the day before where City staff were out on a site visit in the community having a conversation with two community members. While they were talking, one of the community members had a medical event that required lifesaving interventions. She thanked several staff for their efforts and the Fire Department for their fast response.

Mayor Dahlhoff had nothing to report.

**COUNCILMEMBER  
REPORTS:**

Councilmembers Jefferson, Swarthout and Von Holtz gave reports.

Councilmembers Agabi, Cathey and Sullivan had nothing to report.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With there being no further business, Mayor Dahlhoff adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.**

Prepared by Melody Valiant, City Clerk